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Our Little Secrets

Fallujah Kill Zone

By David Martinez

The first thing you notice is an unnerving, horrible quiet, a silence without the sound of voices, car engines, children playing, or televisions. Even the birds are wise enough to have gone elsewhere. And yet we are in a city with a population of 300,000, in the middle of the day.

We passed the last mujaheedin patrol two blocks ago, and they waved us through when our escort told them what we were there for. To evacuate wounded, and to collect the dead.

We drop out of the truck and start walking, our passports held high in our otherwise empty hands. We leave our Iraqi driver and enter the crushing quiet of the Kill Zone, the no man's land between the rebels and the American forces, somewhere inside the town of Fallujah. The team is made up of me, a British woman, and an Iraqi woman. As we walk, I grab the Brit's hand and squeeze it. "For luck", I say, and I think I will remember the wink she gives me for the rest of my life. No one, and I mean no one, is on the empty streets. A dry fear fills my throat as we advance into the dusty war zone for a few excruciating blocks. Then a man opens the door of a house, gesturing frantically with wild eyes. We can see what he is pointing at: to our left, the street is followed by a low brick wall, which ends at a four-way intersection. In the middle of the crossroads lies a young man, covered in blood, a Kalashnikov still slung around his body.

The man from the house then motions around the corner, up the street away from the victim, and says in a

(**OLS** *continued on page 2*)

The Return of Robert Rubin

Kerry, Jobs and the Economy

By Alexander Cockburn

For the millions of progressives who abandoned Al Gore in 2000 and either stayed at home or voted for Ralph Nader, what has the prospective Democratic nominee, John Kerry, got to offer?

By now the answers are on the record. Kerry wants more troops in Iraq and he wants austerity at home. By announcing April 9 that as president he would make deficit-reduction his prime task in managing the economy, Kerry's as good as stated that he has no plans to combat America's greatest domestic problem: the lack of jobs, currently advertised in the notorious "jobless recovery". So what's left for the progressives to vote for?

In the current US economic recovery the growth in gross domestic product (GDP) has been 3.4 percent, which is healthy. But employment growth has been a negative 0.1 percent. The March job numbers were good but we are still down 600,000 jobs from the trough of the cycle in the fourth quarter of 2001 (130.9 million in 2001.4 to 130.3 million now).

More than three years into the recovery from the 2001 recession, the U.S. economy has not produced any net increase in jobs which, as Professor Robert Pollin of the University of Massachusetts points out, is the first time since 1949 that this normal pattern of job growth in a recovery has not occurred.

Is the culprit the notorious "outsourcing", with telemarketers in Bombay and other Indian cities doing jobs formerly held here by Americans? Pollin says the available evidence suggests that the pace of outsourcing since the beginning of the recovery in November 2001 has not grown at a rate to make it "the only, or even necessarily the primary, factor behind the jobless recovery".

Technology is producing greater productivity, meaning companies here need fewer workers to produce the same number of goods. But there's a darker side to this productivity picture and one that confronts directly the current battle over over-time. Big chains like Walmart are getting their workers to put in longer shifts without overtime pay.

Simultaneously the crisis in states' budgets has led to terrible job loss in health and education programs. Pollin says that in fiscal 2002, 17 states cut health care programs, 10 cut income support or employment support programs, and 17 cut other social service programs.

Conditions deteriorated further in fiscal year 2003, with fourteen states cutting spending on secondary education, and twenty states cutting budgets for college and universities.

Kerry has no plans to confront this crisis. His sole bet is on deficit reduction providing a decisive boost to the economy, and there's nothing to back up that theory, beyond the self-esteem of Rubin and Kerry's economic team of ex-Clintonites. So again the question, what's Kerry got to offer beyond the purely passive property of not being George Bush, not usually an avenue to

(**Kerry** *continued on page 6)*

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(**OLS** *continued from page 1)*

thick Arabic accent, "Americans!" Then he makes a hand gesture of a gun firing. So to retrieve the young man will mean walking into American sniper fire.

We creep along the wall until we are almost at the end where the intersection begins. If we carefully look through cracks in the masonry, we can see them: three U.S. Marines in shooting positions, about a block away, aiming straight down the street toward the victim. The situation is further complicated by a car that stands abandoned between the prone man and the soldiers, with all four doors hanging open as if the occupants have suddenly fled. Around it are scattered several RPG's and rockets. So if we attempt to do anything, the Americans will assume we are enemy fighters.

We decide to attempt communication with them. The Brit tries first. "HELLO!", she yells. "Can you hear me?" No response. I give it a try. "We are a medical emergency team! We want to retrieve this man in the street!" Maybe it's the American accent. "Go ahead!" yells a soldier.

"Okay! We're coming out! Don't shoot!" I reply.

We leave the safety of the wall and enter the street. The three Marines simply stare at us. We go to the victim and immediately see that he is gone: rigor mortis has even set in. Leaving his weapon lying on the ground, we pick him up and start to carry him through the dead streets back toward the waiting truck. After we have gone about a block, one of the Americans yells from behind us, "Hey!" We stop. "Drop your weapons!" I want to laugh. But it's not funny. Or maybe it is. "We don't have any weapons!" He nods. "Oh. Okay!" We resume hauling the corpse to the truck.

Entering Fallujah was difficult, but not impossible. We came in along the back roads, following the scintillating Furat river (called the Euphrates by the colonizers), past beautiful date groves, villages of clay houses, and herds of goats. The air is marvelously dry, clean, and bright, the polar opposite of Baghdad's choking, fume-ridden skies. It is a fantastic and timeless landscape.

We are an international group, bringing medical supplies to the town in a chartered bus. There are journalists from Canada, Pakistan, and England, as well as activists from England, Wales, and Australia. There are also four Iraqis, two journalists and two translators.

Along the way, we pass a stream of vehicles headed the opposite direction, evacuating women, children, and the elderly. On our own path we are joined by minivans and pickups carrying medical and other supplies into the besieged city. Each vehicle bears a banner with the name of the town or neighborhood that is making the donation. Local people stand by the roadside, offering water and food to anyone helping their city. At one point, a group of young boys throws bread and rolls into our bus, hitting us in the heads. The murderous military operation against Fallujah has indeed united Iraqis in solidarity.

As we get closer, every crossroads is guarded by groups of masked mujahadeen wielding rifles. They wave us on and shout "Afye!", or "Bravo!" in Arabic. The people's spirit is strong here, and they intend to fight to the death against the Americans.

This venture has been arranged by a friend of ours, a Palestinian activist and professional bodyguard who has contacted a mosque in Fallujah to ensure our safety. He is tall, with a moustache, tiny glasses, and a paunch, and given to relentless chainsmoking. He is also, incidentally, barking mad. But in some situations, it's only the craziest people that you can trust.

When we finally arrive in Fallujah, we go immediately to a hospital, which is really a converted clinic, and deliver the medical supplies. We have brought suture kits, blood bags, bandages, and blankets, among other items. The hospital staff help us unload the cargo, and we haven't been there ten minutes before casualties start arriving.

A car screeches around the corner and slams to a stop in front of the hospital. Volunteers scramble for stretchers while young mujahadeen, faces covered by khaffiyas, scan the horizon. A family: a mother and two children, are removed from the vehicle. They have all been shot, and are screaming in pain. We help bring them inside the already crowded building.

The man in charge of the clinic, an exhausted Iraqi who speaks fluent English and was trained as a U.N. coordinator, explains that he has very little supplies to work with, and that it is almost impossible to cross the town to move people or medicines, due to American troops. We are also shown an ambulance that he tells us was shot up by the soldiers, as was the driver. The vehicle has bullet holes in the front windows, sides, and top, and the driver has a bandage on his head.

Our Palestinian guide soon wades through the crowd to find us. "I need volunteers!", he shouts, his preferred method of communication, "Now!" "To do what, exactly?", someone enquires. "Retrieve wounded persons!" he replies.

My hand goes up, and the next thing I know, myself, the Brit, and the Iraqi woman are standing in the back of a flatbed truck, with a grimly smiling Fallujah man next to us who waves a Red Crescent flag and sings "Allah akbar, God is great", as we roll towards the Kill Zone. Somehow, his singing makes me feel better. A fighter holding an RPG-7 waves at us as we pass him.

We return successfully to the hospital with the dead fighter, to find that the Palestinian has driven an ambulance through American sniper positions to move wounded people to the hospital. He returns shortly, his mission accomplished, and the shooting victims are carried into the building.

By now night has fallen. Nevertheless, on the next ambulance run, our same team of three volunteers to help. As we mount the vehicle, I squeeze the Brit's hand a second time and she winks at me. Then away we go. The Palestinian drives murderously fast, and as we wheel around one corner, he yells, "Snipers!" and we all hit the floor of the van. But there are no shots

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(**Kolko** *continued from page 1)*

fired, and we arrive at another clinic in a different part of town to move wounded patients to the main hospital. We run with rolling gurneys through the dark, there being no electricity in Fallujah at the moment, and load the patients to the ambulance, for another harrowing ride back.

As soon as we arrive and begin unloading the patients, the hospital staff tell us that there is a pregnant woman in premature labor that needs to be brought from her house. And so we are off again, to another part of town. This time there is no warning from the driver. Only a rifle crack as American snipers open fire on our ambulance.

Riding in the back, I can see the flash of the gun as bullets pierce the walls of the vehicle above our heads. Thank God I am on the floor. Another shooter blows out our headlights, and I hear the Brit, who is in the front seat, scream as pieces of engine spray into the cabin. Then they take out our front tires. It is madness, we are in a clearly marked ambulance, with a flashing, noisy siren, and they are shooting at us. We in the back huddle on the floor, clutching each other like lovers as another bullet rips into the engine. The driver throws the vehicle into reverse, hitting a curb at tremendous speed and taking out the rear tires. We screech back to the hospital on rims alone, with my breath pounding in my ears.

It is now late, and since there is not much we can do at the clinic, we retire to our quarters for the night. We are led along dark streets, keeping close to the walls, while red and orange military flares shoot overhead and rocketfire is heard in the distance. We are put up in a family's house, where we sit down to a much needed dinner in Fallujah.

The next morning we begin to load our bus, the same one we came to Fallujah in, with wounded people to take to Baghdad hospitals. While this is transpiring, the Iraqi woman whom we went out with the day before runs up to me. "The same mission as yesterday, the same place they want us to go", she says. "Do you want to do it?" I agree, and advise that the same three of us should go.

We jump on board the same flatbed truck, carrying a white Red Crescent flag. Our favorite mujahadeen, a boy of eleven years who is already a seasoned fighter, shouts to us that nothing will happen to us, that they will protect us and that God is on our side. We roll back towards the

It is madness. We are in a clearly marked ambulance, with a flashing, noisy siren, and they are shooting at us.

Kill Zone, on the same route as the day before. On the way, I squeeze the Brit's hand. She winks at me.

Again we leave the truck and walk slowly through empty streets. We see where the dead man was that we picked up the day before. The abandoned car and rockets have disappeared. But now there are many more soldiers. Where before there were a few Marines, now there are scores. A whole line of houses are occupied, and soldiers are visible on every roof, scanning the horizon with field glasses. We leave the truck and start walking, repeating the same lines: "We are an international emergency medical team! Please do not shoot us!"

Three Marines run down the front stairs of a house and approach us very cautiously. They take up positions on the street and nervously eye us.

Their team leader, sweaty and covered with dust, looks me over incredulously, an American man standing in front of him in an orange baseball cap and jeans. "What in the fuck are you doing here?", he asks. I could well ask him the same question, but I don't. "We're here to evacuate wounded people", the Brit replies. "There aren't any around here", he says. We tell him we have to look anyway, and he says okay and returns to the house that he and his men are operating out of. Nearby, we find a middle-aged man lying dead in the street. He is clearly unarmed, but shot in his neck and side by a sniper. As we begin to remove the body, his family pours out of a nearby house, all of them hysterical with grief and fear. They want to know why someone didn't come earlier, why he had to die, and if they themselves can safely leave. It is a very difficult situation, and the Iraqi woman with us does an excellent job of keeping everyone calm. The Brit and myself return to the Marines, to negotiate the evacuation of the family, who are one half-block away from the soldiers.

The Marines also ask us a favor: they have a family in a house that they are occupying, and they cannot give them food or water. Can we evacuate them as well? We agree, and our Iraqi comrade goes inside with the soldiers to talk to the second family.

The Brit and I wait for her on the curb, the only two people on the otherwise empty streets. The day is hot and dry, and it seems bizarre to be just sitting there in the middle of a war. But strange as it sounds, I feel that we are doing the right thing: for the people living in Fallujah, it is literally hell on earth. And if we can be of help, by virtue of our nationality or our skin color, in getting innocent people out of harm's way, then that is what we are going to do.

As the family in the occupied house emerges, automatic gunfire starts up very close by, and the Marines tell us we are going to have to get this thing done fast. We bring the first family out of their house and group the two families together, then load them all onto the truck that we came in on, as well as a new, functioning ambulance that has just arrived. We also put the slain father and the bodies of two dead fighters in the back of the ambulance, where due to space, we are forced to ride. The stink of death is almost overpowering and a cloud of flies accompanies us back to the hospital.

By then it is time to leave Fallujah. The bus that we came in on is loaded with injured persons, including the burn victim from the night before, and we say our goodbyes to the hospital staff. Word is sent out to the mujahadeen guarding the roads to let us through safely, and we begin the journey back to Baghdad.

There is only one hitch on the return trip, when we take a wrong turn on the outskirts of town and run into a bunch of fighters who don't know who we are. It seems that the city's defenders are not centrally organized, working in small groups, and these folks haven't heard about us. They literally come out of the woodwork brandishing Kalashnikovs and pistols, pointing them at the bus and demanding to know what we are doing there, a bunch of foreigners on a bus leaving Fallujah. Are we evacuating wounded Americans? Are we spies?

It is very tense for a few moments, but luckily the bus is filled with wounded locals, who explain indignantly to the gunmen what is going on, and we are then free to go. CP

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Party Favors

The Political Business of Terry McAuliffe

By Jeffrey St. Clair

In May 1999, the Labor Department brought suit against Jack Moore and John Grau, charging the two men with mismanaging the pension fund for the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. Moore was the longtime secretary of the union, while Grau was the vice-president of the National Electrical Contractor's Association, which was partner in the fund. At issue was a series of sweetheart real estate deals in central Florida, which regulators labeled "imprudent", and cost the fund money. Moore and Grau eventually settled the case for more than six figures. The union was forced to kick in another $5 million to cover the losses to the pension fund. The person at the center of the scandal, however, made out in the deal very well, indeed. His name: Terry McAuliffe, now head of the DNC.

McAuliffe met Moore in 1988, when both were raising money for the doomed presidential bid of Dick Gephardt. They became close friends, allies in a campaign to redesign the Democratic Party into a more moderate political vessel, along the lines of the pre-Reagan Republicans. Moore controlled the $6 billion IBEW pension fund and had a reputation for investing money in businesses run by friends and political cronies.

So it was that in November 1990, McAuliffe approached Moore and his friend Grau with a proposal for a real estate partnership in central Florida with an investment company called American Capital Management, which McAuliffe owned with his wife Dorothy. The deal involved the purchase of the Woodland Square Shopping Center and five apartment complexes outside Orlando, Florida. It was a lopsided partnership. The pension fund put up $39 million to purchase the property. McAuliffe shelled out $100, yet he and his wife enjoyed 50 percent ownership in the project. He eventually parlayed his $100 investment into a $2.45 million profit.

Fresh from this triumph, McAuliffe approached Moore with a new proposal. He asked Moore to dip into the pension fund one more time for $6 million so that he could purchase a parcel of land south of Orlando called Country Run, which McAuliffe planned to subdivide into 500 single-family homes. Moore obliged and loaned McAuliffe the money. The development soon proved to be a bust. Only half the homes were built and many of them didn't sell. Years passed, but McAuliffe never bothered to make a single payment to the pension fund on the loan. According to Labor Department records, McAuliffe was in default from December 1992 through October 1997. The managers of the pension fund never demanded payment or called in the loan. The only collateral they had required was the nearly worthless Country Run property itself.

Eventually, McAuliffe found a buyer for the property and repaid the loan. But the aroma of the deals attracted the attention of the Labor Department, which had been looking into the looting of worker pension funds. In May of 1999, the agency brought a suit against Moore and Grau for mismanagement of the fund. Both eventually settled, agreeing to six figure fines, and resigned their positions. The IBEW was compelled to reimburse the pension fund to the tune of five million dollars. The Labor Department didn't have any authority to go after McAuliffe. That was up to the Clinton Justice Department and they took a pass. He wasn't sued and wasn't dinged with. So a labor fund was looted and Terry McAuliffe got very rich.

This wasn't the only time McAuliffe steered a labor union toward dangerous legal and financial shoals. In 1996, McAuliffe helped devise a political money-cycling scheme that led to the downfall of several leaders of the Teamster's Union, including the union's reform-minded president Ron Carey and his political director William Hamilton. At Hamilton's trial on corruption charges, Richard Sullivan, the former director of finance for the Democratic National Committee, testified that McAuliffe asked Sullivan and other top DNC fundraisers to approach big Democratic donors who could make a contribution of at least $50,000 to the re-election campaign of Ron Carey, then in a pitched battle with James Hoffa, Jr. Under McAuliffe's scheme, Sullivan testified, the Teamster's Union would later recycle that $50,000 back into various Democratic Party accounts. Once again, McAuliffe was never charged with wrongdoing and his lawyer, Richard Ben-Veniste, repeatedly said there's was nothing illegal in his client's plan. He lives a charmed life.

* * *

Terry McAuliffe was born in 1957 in Syracuse, New York. His father was a longtime Democratic influence peddler in up-state New York and a top fundraiser for the party. Through his father's influence, he got a position as a fundraiser for Jimmy Carter. And then he was off and running, renting his financial services to House and senate races and gubernatorial elections.

McAuliffe's control over the party stems from his role as the prime dispenser of campaign cash

In 1984, he began to fine-tune his craft under the wing of Tony Coelho, the longtime House whip and master fundraiser from California. At the time, Coelho was heading up the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, the main DNC fundraising apparatus for House races.

More than anyone, Coelho laid the foundations for the Democratic Party's open courting of big business. And Terry McAuliffe, working from the master's rolodex, served as Coelho's chief apprentice, In the early 90s, the really big money began to pour into the DNC. McAuliffe recruited swag-bellied donations from Arco and Chevron, Entergy and Enron, Phillip Morris and Monsanto, Boeing and Lockheed, Citibank and Weyerhaeuser. Many of these corporations had all but

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During the Clinton age, McAuliffe was personally responsible for raising, largely from corporate sources, more than $300 million for the DNC.

abandoned the Democrats during the Reagan era. McAuliffe lured them back with promises of favorable treatment by a new generation of anti-regulatory Democrats attuned to the special needs of multinational corporations. This was the mulch bed from which the Clinton presidency sprouted.

By 1994, Clinton himself had attuned himself to McAuliffe's magic touch. He tapped him as the chief fundraiser for the 1996 reelection campaign. In this capacity, McAuliffe masterminded some of the more risque political fundraising operations since the Kennedy era. There were the fundraisers at Buddhist temples in California. There were the notorious coffee klatches, where for a six-figure contribution to the DNC, corporate executives were brought to the White House for some face-time with Bill and Hillary, Al and Tipper, and a retinue of cabinet secretaries, with pen in hand ready to address any nagging problem. McAuliffe also devised the plan to rent out the Lincoln Bedroom to top contributors for slumber parties with the president.

Over the course of the next six years, McAuliffe was personally responsible for raising, largely from corporate sources, more than $300 million for the DNC.

* * *

When Gore lost in 2000, the party fell back into the control of the Clintons and their chief emissary, Terry McAuliffe. McAuliffe's implacable loyalty to Clinton was soon rewarded. Later in 2001, Bill Clinton engineered the ouster of Joe Andrew as head of the DNC and installed McAuliffe, who only months earlier had offered to purchase the Clintons a house in Chappaqua, New York for $1.3 million, as the chief of the party. As the head of the DNC, McAuliffe was now in a position to protect the Clintons' legacy, reward loyalists, punish party dissidents and select the next presidential nominee.

When Gore began to flirt with the notion of challenging Bush in 2004, McAuliffe went to work to kill off his campaign before it even started. He went straight to Gore's top political sponsors and advised them to withhold funds from the Gore campaign chest. The sabotage of the nascent Gore 2004 campaign was just a run-up for demolition job McAuliffe directed against the unauthorized campaign of Vermont governor Howard Dean. The Dean threat had almost nothing to do with any perceived ideological heresy from the Vermonter. After all Dean was a run-of-the-mill neoliberal who pretty much aped the centrist economic policies of Clinton. No, the real threat posed by Dean came from his determination to raise millions in campaign contributions outside of the precincts of the DNC. McAuliffe's control over the party stems from his role as the prime dispenser of campaign cash, the money spigot being used to keep political recipients loyal to the party leadership and its centrist policies. Dean showed another way was possible and he had to be put down. And so he was.

But after the Dean juggernaut was scuttled, McAuliffe reached out a helping hand to the defeated candidate. As usual, the hand held forth money. Dean's campaign was in debt, his legions of Deaniacs seething with rage over the demolition of their hero. McAuliffe offered to help pay off Dean's debts and set up his new institute, Democracy for America. In return, Dean has worked to calm his troops, imploring them not to abandon the party for the independent campaign of Ralph Nader.

* * *

In 1996, McAuliffe met a young corporate tycoon named Gary Winnick, who had once referred to himself as the richest man in Los Angeles. Winnick ran Global Crossing, a fiber-optics company chartered in the tax-friendly haven of Bermuda. At the time McAuliffe met Winnick, Global Crossing was a privately held company, poised to cash in on the deregulation of the telecom industry and the new opportunities in China. In 1997, Winnick offered McAuliffe the opportunity to purchase $100,000 worth of Global Crossing stock.

When Global Crossing shares went public in 1998, the value of the stock soared. Operating with an acute sensitivity to the fluctuations of the market that borders on ESP, McAuliffe sold his shares at the precise moment the stock reached its peak price. McAuliffe told the New York Times he pocketed $18 million in the deal. Within a few months, Global Crossing's stock collapsed. The company plunged into bankruptcy and more than a third of its workforce were booted into the ranks of the unemployed.

McAuliffe also served as an on-call DC fixer for Winnick in those optimistic days following the Clinton reelection. In early 1997, McAuliffe set up shop in a plush office in downtown DC owned by a Winnick company called Pacific Capital Group. According to a boastful McAuliffe, Winnick hired him as a consultant to "help him work some deals" with the federal government. "Gary was looking for some political action," McAuliffe told Worth magazine. "He wanted a stable of people around him with great contacts."

Few people inside the Beltway enjoyed better contacts than McAuliffe, as Winnick would soon discover. At an appearance in Los Angeles later that year, Bill Clinton lavished on Winnick his personal endorsement. "Gary Winnick has

(**McAuliffe** *continued on page 6)*

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(**McAuliffe** *continued from page 5*)

been a friend of mine for some time now and I'm thrilled by the success that Global Crossing has had."

Far from being friends, there's no evidence that Winnick and Clinton had even met each other before that evening. But the endorsement proved fruitful. It signaled not only Clinton's faith in the company, but also sent a message to federal agencies that Global Crossing was a firm that they should do business with. It soon paid off. A few months later Global Crossing won a $400 million contract from the Pentagon after repeated prodding from the White House.

After the contract was awarded, McAuliffe arranged for Winnick to play a round of golf with Clinton. Shortly after the afternoon on the links, Winnick donated $1 million to the Clinton presidential library.

Winnick's joy was short lived. In the winter of 2001, the Pentagon rescinded the Global Crossing deal following an investigation by the Inspector General of the Defense Department, which raised questions over how the contract was awarded and Global Crossing's ability to fulfill its obligations. Later, the company fell into a financial death spiral.

The attack dogs in the Bush White House never really made much of McAuliffe's ripe ties to Global Crossing. Why? It almost certainly has something to do with the fact that Global Crossing has been almost equally generous to the Bush family.

In 1997, Global Crossing invited former President George H.W. Bush to address company executives in Tokyo, Japan. At the time, Bush's standard speaking fee was $80,000. The morning after the speech, Bush had breakfast with Winnick. Winnick advised Bush that it would prove much more profitable for the former president to accept payment in Global Crossing stock, then privately held, than cash. Bush agreed. Soon the company went public and the value of Bush's stock swelled to more than $14 million. Not a bad pay-off for an hour's speech. To complete the symmetry, one of Winnick's top executives also serves as a trustee of the G.H.W. Bush Presidential Library Fund.

Rove never made much of McAuliffe's ties to Global Crossing, perhaps because it had been equally generous to G.H.W. Bush.

Winnick tried to cover all of his bases. Yet as with Enron and Tyco, even the most judicious dispensation of money across the political spectrum couldn't save a company that had been looted from the inside out. Global Crossing went down and so did Winnick. But the politicians who made it all possible remain indemnified from any liability for the carnage, protected by a mutually advantageous non-aggression pact. Never bite the hands that feed the system. CP

(**Kerry** *continued from page 1*)

victory? One familiar answer is "a liberal nominee to the US Supreme Court", and the defense of choice. As so often before, it's the Democrats' only substantive plank and one that many in the electorate despise. As regards his posture on nominees, Kerry voted for Scalia, the most right-wing justice on the highest bench in many decades.

While Kerry sends out his war-whoops, Nader has now got the message that since Dean was run off the lot by the DNC there's been no convincing peace candidate putting out the message, Bring the troops home now (though even here Nader, with inexplicable caution, says "in six months"). So Nader may peel away votes from Kerry on the war issue, while millions more listen wanly to Kerry talk about the deficit and how he's not a "redistributionist", meaning he's got the economic platform of an old line Republican.

All the while, amid a hail of bad press for the White House surrounding Woodward's book launch and the bad news from Iraq, Bush is pulling ahead in the polls. It's not that voters particularly like him. His job approval rating is barely above 50 per cent, even after a hugely expensive advertising campaign. Very large numbers of Americans think he's handling the war in Iraq badly. How could they not? But so far Kerry has not been able to take advantage of this popular reserve about the President. Can it be true that the Democrats have managed to find a worthy successor to Mondale and Dukakis as their champion? It's early days yet, but it's beginning to look that way. CP

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